



Knowing the Facts About the Flu

The flu, or influenza, is a highly contagious, respiratory infection caused by type A and type B influenza virus. It is most common in the fall and winter.

The flu virus usually enters the body through the mucous membranes in the mouth, nose, or eyes. For example, when a person with the flu coughs or sneezes, the virus becomes airborne and can be inhaled by anyone nearby. In many communities, school-aged children are among the first to get the flu, and then they carry it home and to other group activities.

The flu and cold are both viral infections. Whereas the cold is a minor viral infection of the nose and throat, the flu is usually more severe and can be a serious illness (see table 1). Each year, up to 40 million Americans develop the flu and about 150,000 are hospitalized. During past epidemics in the US, influenza and its complications have caused between 10,000 and 40,000 deaths. People with the flu and who are greater than 50 years of age or diagnosed (at any age) with a chronic illness such as diabetes, heart disease, or asthma, are more likely to become seriously ill.

Although antiviral medications exist to reduce the length of time one has the flu and to treat flu symptoms, the best way to prevent the flu or lessen the severity of it, is to get a flu shot each fall. If you have not yet received your flu shot this year, please inform your provider so that he or she can evaluate whether you are an appropriate candidate to receive the flu shot!

Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

Table 1. Signs and symptoms of the flu and a cold.

Signs & symptoms	Flu	Cold
Onset	Sudden	Gradual
Fever	High (> 101°F); lasts 3-4 days	Rare
Cough	Dry; can be severe	Hacking
Headache	Prominent	Rare
Muscle aches and pains	Usual; often severe	Slight
Tiredness and weakness	Can last up to 2-3 weeks	Very mild
Extreme exhaustion	Early and prominent	Never
Chest discomfort	Common	Mild to moderate
Stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing	Sometimes	Usual
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common

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**President's Day
(19 Feb 07)**



**The Main Outpatient Pharmacy is open
from 0800 to 1600.**

TRICARE Uniform Formulary Update

Effective 17 Jan 07, TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) designated various medications as Basic Core Formulary (BCF) and Non-formulary (NF) (see Table 2). BCF medications become available at every military treatment facility (MTF) pharmacy once the local Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee meets and is able to add the medication to its formulary. In contrast, NF medications are not eligible to be available at a MTF pharmacy beyond the implementation date, but remain available at the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) or a TRICARE Retail Network Pharmacy at a higher copay (\$22).

Unsure about your medication's availability or its cost...please ask!

Table 2. Drugs designated Non-formulary (NF).

Generic name	Brand name	Implementation date
Dexmethylphenidate (immediate release)	Focalin®	18 Apr 07
Dexmethylphenidate (extended release)	Focalin XR®	18 Apr 07
Methylphenidate	Daytrana® transdermal skin patch	18 Apr 07
Ethinyl estradiol/norethindrone with ferrous	Loestrin 24 Fe®	24 Jan 07
Ethinyl estradiol/levonorgestrel	Seasonique®	24 Jan 07
Miconazole/zinc oxide/white petrolatum	Vusion® ointment	21 Mar 07

Womack Army Medical Center (WAMC) Formulary Update

The following medications were recently **added** to the WAMC formulary.

- Aripiprazole (Abilify®) 5 mg, 10 mg, and 15 mg tablets;
- Aripiprazole (Abilify®) 1 mg/ml oral solution;
- Chlorpheniramine/phenylephrine (Rondec®) 1 mg/3.5 mg oral drops;

- Ezetimibe/simvastatin (Vytorin®) 10 mg/10 mg, 10 mg/20 mg, 10 mg/40 mg, and 10 mg/80 mg tablets; and
- Calcium acetate (PhosLo®) 667 mg gelcaps.

The following medication was recently **deleted** to the WAMC formulary.

- Carbinoxamine/pseudoephedrine (Cardec®) oral drops

Safely Administering Cough and Cold Medications to Children Less than Two Years of Age

Cough and cold medications are widely used to treat children. Overall, the incidence of reported adverse events is low. Nonetheless, before any parent considers giving a prescription or over-the-counter cough and cold medication such as Robitussin DM®, Dimetapp®, or Sudafed® to their child less than 2 years of age, a physician should be consulted.

WAMC has among the best pediatricians and family practitioners to care for your children! We enjoy partnering with you as we provide you the highest quality health-care. Pediatric appointments are available by calling 907-PEDS (7337); Family Practice appointments are made by calling 907-2778.

Womack Army Medical Center

